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UK benefits from Met Office Public Weather Service

4 December 2007

An independent report published today, 4 December, on the value of the Met Office's Public Weather Service (PWS) shows that it contributes at least £614 million to the UK economy, based on just a small sample of the services it provides. The overall value can be expected to be many times more than the PWS budget of £83.2 million.

It has been estimated that for every pound spent on the PWS, the UK economy benefits by over twenty pounds.

The Met Office's PWS provides the forecasts that the UK depends upon, whether it be providing shipping forecasts, severe weather warnings for tomorrow, forecasts for the coming winter, or underpinning the forecasts for the next 100 years.

The report, commissioned by the Public Weather Service Customer Group (PWSCG), details the value of the services provided by the Met Office to key groups such as the contingency community which means that they can take action in your area to minimise the risk of damage which means that you are and your property is kept safe.

The PWS Customer Group acts on behalf of the public for free-at-point-of-use weather services. It also acts as a guardian on behalf of public sector users of the Met Office's underpinning operational capability. The Met Office is a trading fund agency of the Ministry of Defence.

Under-Secretary of State for Defence Derek Twigg said: "This report shows that we are indeed getting excellent value for money from the PWS, and the Met Office as a whole. The PWS and the Met Office provide a service which is second to none in helping the UK understand and make the most of the weather in this country and overseas."

Nick Baldwin, Chair of the PWSCG said: "I welcome the findings of the report. It clearly shows that the Met Office's Public Weather Service benefits society in a significant number of ways. As well as the financial benefit to the UK economy, the Met Office provides a service of incalculable proportions when it comes to issues such as climate change and crucially saving lives and protecting property."

Although much is being done to provide an excellent public forecast service, the PWSCG is not complacent. In the future the PWSCG will continue to work with the Met Office, its customers and other stakeholders to assist them in realising even more benefit in providing more relevant and useful forecasts.

More about the Public Weather Service

How valuable is the Met Office?

Notes

- The PWS Customer Group acts as the customer on behalf of the public for free-at-point-of-use weather services. It also acts as guardian on behalf of public sector users of the Met Office's underpinning operational capability. It reports to the Under Secretary of State for Defence.
- The PWS is funded primarily by the Ministry of Defence on behalf of Government. In addition, the Civil Aviation Authority funds a share of the production of observations and generic forecast information. The current total PWS funding is approx. £83 million p.a.
- The PWS funds high impact weather forecasts, including the National Severe Weather Warning Service, Gale Warnings and the Shipping Forecast, site-specific forecasts, global pollution forecasts, UK seasonal forecasts, UK climate records and the National Meteorological Library and Archive.

For further information:

Met Office Press Office +44 (0)1392 886655
E-mail: pressoffice@metoffice.gov.uk

Met Office Customer Centre 0870 900 0100
If you're outside the UK +44 (0)1392 885680